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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

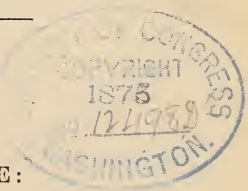
CATECHISM

OF THE

Apostleship of Prayer.

BY A MISSIONARY PRIEST.

From the Messenger of the Sacred Heart.



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PREFACE.

WE know no better preface to the following pages than the few remarks handed by their author, when submitting them for approval, to the Director-General of the Association of the Apostleship of Prayer.

He speaks as follows:

"To-day, the Apostleship of Prayer is established in many portions of the Christian world, and counts six million names on its roll of membership. So widely established and so Catholic an association should have its catechism. This idea, which I had long entertained, you were pleased to approve highly when we met at Rome. I have the honor at present of submitting to your reverence the result of my labors.

"In the catechetical form adopted, I address those who are prevented from reading the larger works which so fully set forth the object of our Association, and the style is in-

telligible even to the least cultivated minds. Those, to whom is intrusted the care of instructing others, will find in the following pages the substantial idea of the Apostleship, expressed in as comprehensive and clear a manner as possible. So often have I had occasion to admire the rare success of such catechetical instructions for instilling into young minds a knowledge and esteem of pious objects, that I promise myself not a little good from this poor effort of mine to advance the interests of the Sacred Heart and to enlarge the useful sphere now filled by the Apostleship of Prayer."

CONTENTS.

PART FIRST.

THE APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER CONSIDERED AS A PRIVATE DEVOTION.

LESSON		PAGE
I.	Nature and Object of the Apostleship of Prayer	7.
II.	The Efficacy of Prayer when Employed in Advancing the Interests of the Heart of Jesus	11
III.	How easy is the Practice of Prayer in favor of the Interests of the Sacred Heart. .	15
IV.	Advantages of the Apostleship of Prayer.	20
V.	Continuation of the same subject . .	28

PART SECOND.

THE APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER CONSIDERED AS AN ASSOCIATION.

I.	Nature of this Association, and its Efficacy in Advancing the Interests of the Divine Heart	32
II.	Continuation of the preceding subject .	36

LESSON PAGE
III. The Facility of Discharging the Duties of the Apostleship of Prayer considered as an Association 40
IV. The Utility of certain Pious Organizations for rendering more Efficacious the Apostleship of Prayer 44
V. Advantages of the Apostleship of Prayer considered as an Association 48
VI. Continuation of the preceding subject . 51

CATECHISM OF THE

APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER.

PART FIRST.

The Apostleship of Prayer Considered as a Private Devotion.

Lesson I.—*Nature and Object of the Apostleship of Prayer.*

Question. In what does the Apostleship of Prayer consist?

Answer. It consists in making the interests of the Heart of Jesus our special charge, and in striving by all means, but chiefly by prayer, to advance them.

Q. What is meant by making the interests of the Heart of Jesus our own?

A. It is to busy ourselves in what this Heart concerns itself for, to desire what It desires and to seek what It seeks.

Q. Has then the Heart of Jesus special interests?

A. Most certainly, as have all loving hearts; for every living heart, there are events which affect it in a special manner, which contribute either to its advantage or to its honor.

Q. Will you quote some examples?

A. Willingly. A mother's heart has, as its special interests, the health and happiness of her children; a friend's heart, the welfare of a friend. The sick man seeks his cure; the prisoner, his deliverance; the merchant, success in trade; and the scholar, progress in his studies: in a word, every heart has its wants, its desires, and its interests.

Q. What then are the interests of the Heart of Jesus?

A. The glory of the Father and the salvation of souls.

Q. How do you know this?

A. Jesus said at different times: *I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. Now this is the will of him that sent me, the Father:*

*that all that he hath given me, I lose not thereof, but raise it up again at the last day.** *In this is my Father glorified, that you bring forth very much fruit and become my disciples.*† *I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?*‡ *The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*§ *I am come, that they (my sheep) may have life, and may have it more abundantly.*||

These texts and others of similar import abundantly show us that the glory of His Father, which is promoted by the salvation of souls, is the primary interest of Jesus Christ. For this object He became incarnate, toiled on earth, suffered, died, and now lives His wonderful life in the Eucharist. In the tabernacle, as on the cross, His Heart at each pulsation cries out, *Sitio*, I thirst for souls!

Q. Is not the triumph of the Church and the Holy See among the great interests of the Saviour's Heart?

A. Without doubt; but the Church and

* St. John vi. ‡ Luke xii. || John x
† Ib. xv. § Ib. xix.

the Holy See continue on earth the mission of Jesus, the salvation of souls. Around this one object centre all the interests of Jesus and His Church.

Q. The Apostleship of Prayer, you say, seeks to advance the interests of the Heart of Jesus. Can it effect this?

A. Certainly; for we have it in our power to promote in many ways the salvation of souls.

Q. How can this be done?

A. By word, in causing God to be known and loved; by the pen, in publishing to the world the little we fathom of His perfections, and by instructing men in their duties; by good example, in glorifying God in our exterior life, and by leading others to praiseworthy imitation of our good works; so that in all things He will be honored.

Q. It is especially by prayer, you say, that the Apostleship of Prayer advances the interests of the Heart of Jesus?

A. Prayer is certainly the chief instrument at our disposal, and from it the league receives its name.

LESSON II. — *The efficacy of Prayer when Employed in Advancing the interests of the Heart of Jesus.*

Question. Is prayer an efficacious means of promoting the interests of the Sacred Heart?

Answer. Without doubt it is the most powerful of all means to procure God's glory in the salvation of souls.

Q. What is needed for the salvation of a soul?

A. Sanctifying or habitual grace. Only this can render souls pleasing to God and worthy of eternal life.

Q. What is necessary to enrich souls with sanctifying grace, to restore it to those that have lost it, and to preserve, foster and increase it in those that possess it?

A. There is needed a series of special favors in which the soul is aided by God; that is to say, a chain of graces, which are called *actual.* For example, St. Augustin was grovelling in vice and groping in error. Little by little he came to realize the falsity of the doctrines which he held; he left his native country where evil com-

panions betrayed him into sin, and went to Milan, where the holy Bishop Ambrose instructed him. Having one day heard a mysterious voice, he entered into himself, he prayed, he wept, he broke the bonds of sins that held him captive, he was converted and he became a saint. All these various circumstances that influenced his conduct, these many interior illuminations, these strong inspirations, were bestowed on him by the God of mercies. They were actual graces.

Q. As sanctifying grace is necessary for the salvation of souls, and as this is obtained, preserved and recovered, if lost, by the help of actual grace, the best means of procuring the salvation of souls would be anything that most effectually obtains for us actual grace.

A. Very true, and prayer is this very means. Scripture, tradition, theology and the practice of the saints declare this truth, which is not less certainly contained in the promise of our Lord Himself. Whatsoever you ask the Father in My name, He will grant it to you.

Q. Since prayer can so infallibly obtain

actual grace, how does it happen that sinners who pray even fervently are not converted?

A. The fault is not the inefficacy of prayer; grace is always granted, but it knocks at the door of the heart, seeking free admission: it never enters by violence.

Q. To know then for whom to pray, we should first know who will correspond to the graces that may be bestowed in answer to our prayers.

A. This is neither necessary nor possible. That obstinacy of heart which one grace may have failed to overcome, a second may conquer. We must pray always. Besides, precisely because we do not know the dispositions of souls or the coöperation with grace which they may be prepared to show, we should exclude no one from the benefit of our prayers. So says St. Thomas. It is likewise the injunction of St. Paul: *I desire that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all men.*

Q. Can you furnish any proofs of the efficacy of prayer that is made for others?

A. There is nothing easier. The annals

of the Arch-confraternity of our Lady of Victories, for our times, and ecclesiastical history, for past ages, are full of facts that establish this point beyond question. Not a few festivals of the Church owe their origin to miracles obtained by prayer, and to confine ourselves to scriptural facts, did not Abraham secure for doomed Sodom the most favorable conditions? did not the prayer of Aaron arrest the terrible scourge that was chastising a rebellious people? and did not the unceasing supplications of Moses force God to suspend the decree of extermination that was on the point of being hurled against wicked Israel?

Q. Can prayer further all the interests of the Heart of Jesus?

A. All, without exception, since all are embodied in that one desire which makes Him yearn for the salvation of souls, and prayer, as we have just seen, is sovereignly efficacious in obtaining this end.

Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer; not the conversion of sinners, the enkindling of fervor in tepid souls, the reconcili-

ation of infidels and heretics to the true Church, the perseverance of the just, the happy death of departing souls, the propagation of the Faith, the prosperity and spread of the Holy Church, the triumph of the Holy See, the sanctification of the clergy, the holiness of religious orders, the success of missions, the relief of departed souls.

Nothing, in a word, is too great for prayer to achieve, so powerful is its action. Whatever faith can desire, prayer can secure.

LESSON III. — *How easy is the Practice of Prayer in favor of the interests of the Sacred Heart.*

Question. What are the prayers which so effectually advance the interests of the Sacred Heart?

Answer. According to St. Francis de Sales, who follows in this particular the ancient Fathers of the Church, there are three sorts of prayers; *vocal* prayer, *mental* prayer and *living* prayer. Each of

these three can do much to advance the interests of Jesus.

Q. What is vocal prayer?

A. That which employs external formulas. Under this head are embraced not only what we commonly understand by prayers and ejaculations, but likewise the public offices of the Church, as Mass and the Canonical Hours. All these prayers can serve the interests of Jesus, when offered with that intention.

Q. What is mental prayer?

A. That made interiorly without the use of words, either by meditation, contemplation or prompt elevation of the soul to God. Herein are contained treasures of resources that may be applied to the practice we are striving to advance.

Q. What do you understand by living prayer?

A. I understand, with St. Francis de Sales, all good actions offered to God for the purpose of gaining some favor.

Q. What is requisite that these actions should constitute living prayer?

A. Two conditions must be verified in

them. First, the actions must themselves be good, or at least indifferent. Secondly, they must have an *impetratory* value, that is, be capable of securing favors from God.

Q. What gives actions this impetratory value?

A. It is enough to offer them to God, at the beginning of the day, with the intention of meriting the favor we desire, and not to retract, during the course of the day, this primitive intention, by substituting some contrary motive, as, for instance, of vanity, sensuality or the like. These unworthy motives, it must be observed, destroy the spiritual value of those actions only which they directly influence. The others remain meritorious by virtue of the general offering made at the commencement of the day.

Q. Would it not be advisable to renew this intention before each action of the day?

A. Certainly, the oftener it be renewed the greater the fervor and efficacy of this living prayer.

Q. Are all our actions, in which these conditions are verified, of equal merit?

A. No. Supposing that all are performed with equal fervor, the sacrifices which we impose on ourselves and those which come to us from the hand of God, when borne with an intention of meriting some favor, are by far the most efficacious prayer we can make. It is good to pray, better still to work, but best of all to suffer for Christ.

Q. Is it necessary to be in the state of grace, that our actions may have this virtue of prayer?

A. The state of grace is necessary to make our actions, properly speaking, *meritorious*, that is deserving of eternal life. It is not required to give them this impetratory value, that is to enable us to merit some particular favor from God's mercy. However, purity of conscience renders all our prayers more agreeable to God and more influential with His Divine Heart.

Q. Everybody, then, can do something for the interests of Jesus?

A. Everybody; for every one can offer, with this object in view, some prayer, *vocal, mental* or *active.*

Q. Can one at all times pray for these sacred interests of Jesus?

A. At all times, since it is always in our power to offer prayer of some kind to God.

A child, for instance, may offer during his morning prayer the actions and little trials of the day in accordance with the intention of the Sacred Heart, with the view of promoting its holy desires; without further thought, the day goes by and his actions consecrated to God are meanwhile ascending to the divine throne in the incense of prayer, and falling again in the dews of grace on his path. Every syllable that he spells, every line that he draws, his words, his labors, his recreations, his meals, his little trials, his very sleep, in a word, sin excepted, everything that he does is presented by his Angel as a grateful prayer to the Father of Mercies.

Here, then, is the real *Philosopher's Stone*, which, according to ancient superstition, turned what it touched into gold. We have only to will it, and, by a daily offering, the intention transforms our daily

actions and sufferings into golden prayers, in exchange for which God gives us precious treasures of grace.

LESSON IV. — *Advantages of the Apostleship of Prayer.*

Question. I understand prayer is all powerful for obtaining grace, and with grace, salvation for ourselves and others; moreover, prayer is very easily made, since by a simple direction of intention, before beginning our actions, they assume the character of most earnest prayer. But why is it, that instead of employing for our own advantage this precious instrument of grace, we are exhorted in the Apostleship of Prayer to use it for advancing the interests of the Heart of Jesus?

Answer. Could we use it in behalf of a more worthy object? Did not Jesus *die for us that we might live, not for ourselves but for Him?** Do we not often sacrifice our dearest personal interests for the sake

* II Cor. v.

of parents, friends, aye, and even of strangers, and shall we refuse to do as much for Jesus, our beloved Brother, our Saviour, our most faithful Friend?

Q. Does, then, Jesus really require us to sacrifice for Him our spiritual interests?

A. Not at all, for we can find no safer means of promoting our spiritual welfare than by laboring for the Heart of Jesus, and consecrating to its divine interests the fruit of our daily prayers; in other words, by practising the Apostleship of Prayer.

Q. What are the advantages derived from the practice of the Apostleship of Prayer?

A. I cannot enumerate all; chiefly, however, the Apostleship of Prayer renders a Christian life more *real*, more *pious*, more *meritorious*, more *easy*, more *happy*.

Q. How does the Apostleship make a Christian life more real?

A By nurturing the true spirit of Christianity.

Q. What is this spirit?

A. A spirit of union with Jesus. "Be ye penetrated with the sentiment of Jesus

Christ," wrote St. Paul to the faithful. Is not this devotion of our lives and labors to the interests of Jesus Christ an excellent method of uniting ourselves to Him, and of becoming penetrated with His spirit?

So thought and acted those models of Christian life, the saints, and their holy Queen, who laid to heart the interests of Jesus rather than their own, and gave freely their labors, and sometimes their lives, to secure the triumph of these same holy interests.

Q. How does the Apostleship of Prayer render a Christian life more pious?

A. True piety consists in friendship for Jesus, in devotion to His Sacred Heart. Now, what friendship more sincere than to procure for Him the one object of His desires? What devotion more real than to make His interests our own? Moreover, unless we possess at least the *Spirit* of the Apostleship of Prayer, true piety becomes impossible. Who would dare to say to another: I am your friend; I am devoted to your welfare; and yet content-

ing himself, without ever asking and receiving help in his own necessities, would never bestir himself in the least for his friend, never make the smallest exertion to procure for him what he wished most to possess?

Q. This would be purest egotism, would it not?

A. So it seems so me, and without hesitation I should call egotistical that devotion which is limited to securing its own selfish projects, whether spiritual or not, without ever displaying any zeal for the Saviour's interests, as the Apostle complains.*

Q. How does the Apostleship of Prayer render a Christian life more meritorious?

A. By enriching with the most precious worth, for eternity, all the actions of the just souls who practise it.

Q. Will you explain this doctrine to me?

A. Every action performed in the state of grace, and with a supernatural motive, is meritorious; in other words, deserving of an eternal reward; and this reward

* Philipp. ii.

will be greater in proportion to the excellence of the act; that is to say, the more agreeable to God the motive has been. Now, by practising the Apostleship of Prayer, and offering in the interests of the Sacred Heart our labors, prayers and sufferings, we animate them with the noblest of intentions, we offer them from the best of motives, namely, pure charity towards God and our neighbors.

Q. But in thus transforming, as you say, our labors into prayers for the profit of the Heart of Jesus, do we not abandon the merit of our works?

A. Not at all: we sacrifice to the Sacred Heart the *impetratory* fruit of our prayer, that is their efficacy in obtaining favors from God; but their merit, that is the title they establish to an eternal reward, we retain, and this merit is rather increased in proportion to the generosity of our offering. To resume the example of the child, who offers in the morning the day's actions and prayers in the interest of the Sacred Heart; not only do his most trifling actions ascend direct to Heaven as

powerful prayer in behalf of that object to which he has devoted them, but they are entered on the Book of Life as claims to an exceeding reward for eternity.

Q. How does the Apostleship of Prayer make a Christian life more easy?

A. By rendering all duties easy, by means of the reflection that the least sacrifices greatly advance the interests of Jesus, and procure the salvation of souls that would otherwise perish.

Q. Will you illustrate this by an example?

A. Willingly. Let us take a scholar at his desk, his copy-book before him. He is strongly tempted to idleness, and inclined to waste his time in frivolous amusements, or to disturb his companions by forbidden converse with them. At the same instant, in China, is dying a pagan infant, who needs but one actual grace to receive that of baptism. Very soon a missionary will, in fact, pass the place where it is lying, and if he find the child alone, will baptize it. But these few minutes of life are a grace, and notwithstanding its

burning desire for the salvation of souls, the Sacred Heart will grant it, as we have seen, in response to some prayer. Suddenly our scholar recollects himself, and his practice of the Apostleship of Prayer. "Alas!" he says, "one prayer, one act of sacrifice, would profit the Heart of Jesus, and I am hesitating; I am trifling with this inclination to idleness; my God, I offer my labor for the intentions of Thy Sacred Heart;" and so he returns to his duty. "Saved!" cries out the guardian angel of the Chinese infant. "Lord, Thou wantedst but one prayer to grant my client the grace of baptism. A child in Europe has made this prayer, he has offered Thee this sacrifice; grant my child the favor of baptism." The missionary passing by, beholds the dying infant, pours the water on his head, and the innocent flies to heaven, where its prayers never tire in behalf of the scholar to whom it owes the happiness it has received.

Q. Ah, if such be the fruit of our prayers and sacrifices, how generously and fervently should we not make them.

A. "Faith," in the words of St. Paul, "is the conviction of things that appear not." The picture which I have drawn above exemplifies a real truth, which in our temptations we should not lose sight of. Every sacrifice, properly directed, may become a prayer; every prayer obtains a grace, and every grace contributes, and may even at times suffice, to procure the salvation of a soul. How is it possible to believe these truths, and still niggardly refuse our prayers, and cowardly shrink from paltry sacrifices?

Q. How does the Apostleship of Prayer make a Christian life happy?

A. By destroying the three mortal enemies of Christian happiness — egotism, tepidity, and the consciousness of being useless in life.

The egotist is not happy. "He who seeks himself finds himself indeed, but to his own loss." The Apostleship of Prayer replaces this selfishness by devotion to the interest of Christ and of souls.

The tepid soul is never at rest with itself, for it blushes at its shameful degra-

dation, and is never at peace with God, Who, it knows, is disgusted with its cowardice. The Apostleship of Prayer banishes tepidity, by giving to our fervor the impulse of the noblest of motives, the sight of souls expecting their salvation from our generous efforts.

Finally, he is certainly not happy who feels that he neither profits others nor benefits himself. The Apostleship of Prayer applies the remedy, it utilizes everything, rest, recreation, and suffering, by devoting it to the noblest of objects, Jesus Christ.

LESSON V.—*Continuation of the same subject.*

Question. You have said that the surest means of promoting our own welfare is to embrace and advance the interests of Jesus. How do you prove this?

Answer. The preceding lesson has shown this to be true; for are not our true interests, those of eternity, promoted by a practice which enriches us with new merit by animating the actions of our lives with the

spirit of Christ, and which renders easy all sacrifices and the accomplishment of every duty?

Q. But might we not more surely promote our own spiritual welfare by reserving to ourselves the profit of those prayers and labors which the Apostleship counsels us to offer to God according to the intentions of Jesus?

A. No. The surest means of securing favors is to draw down on ourselves the special blessing of their Giver, and how can we more surely do this than by consecrating ourselves unreservedly to His glory? Our interests can never prosper more than when in His infinitely wise, powerful and loving hands. How can our Saviour refuse to take in charge our interests, when He sees us so entirely devoted to His? He is never outdone in generosity, and will make good His own words, *he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it.*

St. Ignatius understood this well: "Were I actually dying," said he, "and certain of my salvation, I should nevertheless willingly risk it by remaining on earth,

provided I could thereby gain more souls to Jesus Christ." "But," replied one who had heard him, "would not this be imprudent, to expose one's own salvation for that of another?" "What," answered the Saint, "is God a tyrant? Think you that He would see me risking my salvation for the welfare of souls, and allow me to fall into hell?"

Q. Would not at least our temporal interests suffer, were we to consecrate to the intentions of the Sacred Heart all our prayers?

A. On the contrary. The Apostleship of Prayer is one of the best forms of devotion to the Heart of Jesus, since it consists in adopting His sentiments, furthering His desires and striving to secure His triumph in all things. Justly may the members of the Apostleship count on the promises made by our Lord to souls who would devote their lives to His Heart. Hear what was pledged by the divine lips to B. Margaret Mary:

"I will give them every grace necessary to their state of life; peace shall reign in their families; they shall be comforted

and sustained in their trials, and I will be their refuge in life and more especially in death. All their undertakings shall prosper."

Q. By consecrating to the interests of the Sacred Heart our prayers and labors, are we prevented from praying for special favors as our own necessity and duty to others may seem to dictate?

A. By no means; our prayers have even greater weight with our Saviour, who has been made, so to speak, our debtor. In case, however, that we desire special graces for ourselves and others, the surest means of attaining them is to redouble our fervor in prayer for the interests of Jesus.

Q. Why is this?

A. Because all graces really useful to us make part of the interests of Jesus Christ's Heart, and thus fall within the object of our prayers. Thus in a manner, we imitate the boatmen, of whom St. Francis de Sales speaks, who make port by turning their backs on the goal and rowing with ceaseless perseverance.

PART SECOND.

The Apostleship of Prayer Considered as an Association.

Lesson I. — *Nature of this Association, and its Efficacy in Advancing the Interests of the Divine Heart.*

Question. May not the Apostleship of Prayer be practised as a private devotion?

Answer. Certainly, and with great fruit; but when practised in and under the form of the Association which bears this title, it offers more numerous and far greater advantages.

Q. There exists, then, an Association entitled the Apostleship of Prayer?

A. Yes; it was founded in 1846, at Puy, under the patronage of *Notre-Dame de France,* and has been inscribed with numerous indulgences by His Holiness Pius IX., gloriously reigning, who approved and confirmed its constitutions by a decree of July 27, 1866, a favor rarely granted to organizations of this character.

Q. What is the nature of this Association?

A. It is a League of Prayers, for furthering the interests of Christ's Divine Heart.

Q. What do you understand by a League of Prayers?

A. I mean a union of faithful souls who pray in common for some specified object.

Q. For what purpose has this League been founded?

A. To multiply the prayers offered in behalf of the Sacred Heart's interests, and to give them greater efficacy.

Q. How does this League multiply prayers?

A. By exacting from its members a generous devotion to the Divine Heart, by frequently recalling to their minds the power of prayer and the faculty of making it, and by suggesting to them easy practices for transforming all their good works into very useful prayers.

Q. How can this League increase the efficacy of prayer made in behalf of Jesus' interests?

A. From two sources; it enriches prayer with that strength that is drawn from the association of pious souls, and with that especially which results from close union with the Divine Heart.

Q. Has prayer made by pious souls in common this additional strength?

A. Yes; as a rope woven of three strands is far stronger than three strands separated. Jesus Christ has given this pledge. *Again I say to you, that if two of you shall agree upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done for them by my Father who is in heaven. For where there are two or three gathered together in my name,* THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM.

Q. Jesus Christ is then present in the midst of the souls united in this Association?

A. He is, and ceaselessly does He present to His Father their prayers in union with those of His own Heart.

Q. Is the Heart of Jesus thus ceaselessly engaged in prayer?

A. It is; and at every instant of the day It immolates Itself on our altars to appease

the Father's justice and to secure benefits for us. In Heaven, says St. Paul, He is always living to make intercession for us.

Q. Is it not enough that Jesus prays? Do His prayers need the aid that is given by an association?

A. His prayers being of infinite value need no aid of ours, but rather that our own prayers may be heard, they should be united to those which He makes. *Ask and ye shall receive,* said Jesus, that is to say, "if you wish to receive, pray, but in union with me; thus your prayers will be all powerful. *If you remain in me . . . . you shall ask whatever you will and it shall be done to you.*" The best means of uniting our petitions to those of Christ's Heart is to offer them in our common prayer; there, according to His promise, Christ will be in the midst of the petitioners, and their prayers shall be heard.

Q. The Sacred Heart is then the strength of the Association of the Apostleship of Prayer?

A. It is its strength, centre and source of fervor. It is a censer filled with burn-

ing coals and sweet perfumes. The prayers of the Associates are grains of incense. Isolated, they emit but a faint odor; cast them together into that Heart aglow with Divine Love, and their individual perfumes unite in one single exquisite aroma, that of omnipotent prayer.

LESSON II. — *Continuation of the preceding subject.*

Question. Can you illustrate in any other manner the fitness of the Association of the Apostleship of Prayer for advancing the interests of the Divine Heart?

Answer. Perhaps by the following parable or allegory, whose meaning will be rapidly drawn from the preceding lessons.

A prince shared the throne of his father, and enjoyed in common with him an immense fortune. Of a most benevolent disposition, this prince busied himself very minutely for his subjects; he looked to all their wants, and burned with a desire to give them relief from his inexhaustible riches. An irrevocable law nevertheless

tied his hands. He could give them nothing except in exchange for a bond signed by his father. His heart grieved to see his generous wishes thus trammelled. Touched with pity for their distressed condition, he formed a society among a chosen number of his subjects. Each member of this society pledged himself to obtain every day a certain number of these bonds and put them in a common treasury. A bank was thus established, a fund formed which was at the disposal of the prince, and at pleasure he could dispense his riches to the needy. Under this allegory lies the idea of the Apostleship of Prayer.

Q. Who is the prince?

A. Jesus, our Saviour, the eternal Son of God, *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, ... the unsearchable riches of Christ; . . . . for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally.* Infinitely benevolent and infinitely rich, He wishes the salvation of all His subjects. He desires for them a supernatural life; and still He sees every-

where souls without number stripped of sanctifying grace, in danger of perishing, or at least of losing that measure of glory intended for them.

Q. Why cannot He secure to them this supernatural and divine life by sharing with them the abundant graces that are treasured in His Sacred Heart?

A. He is like the prince in the parable. In the words of an eminent theologian, the hands of Jesus are tied. According to the ordinary laws of divine Providence, but one actual grace is given gratuitously; this one is the inspiration to pray. To force us to have recourse to Him, Jesus bestows other actual graces only in response to prayer; He does not give them, He sells them.

Q. In exchange for what?

A. For a note or bond whose value is guaranteed by the divine promise. *Amen I say to you, ask and ye shall receive.*

You may fancy then the grief of the Divine Heart as it daily contemplates the wants of so many souls, yearns to satisfy these wants by pouring out with lavish

hand saving graces, and despite all this, for lack of prayers, is constrained to withhold them, or at least to bestow them sparingly.

Q. Who are the chosen subjects that hurry to the aid of their benevolent prince?

A. The members of the Apostleship of Prayer. Each member, on his admission into this Holy League, takes upon himself the obligation of transforming his daily prayers, labors and sufferings into petitions, and these he devotes to the interests of the Divine Heart. To increase their impetratory power, he unites them to the prayers of his associates and to the supplications which the Sacred Heart is ceaselessly offering to the Heavenly Father, and thus a common fund or treasury of prayers is established and placed at the disposition of our Lord.

Q. What name has this common fund?

A. It is called the *Treasury of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, since it is, in fact, a sacred deposit of which Jesus alone has the disposal.

Q. In what manner does Jesus make this disposition?

A. We do not know in detail His intentions, but we know that they are almost infinite in number, since they regard all the possible wants of souls. To satisfy all these intentions, innumerable prayers are required, and these are found in the daily offerings made throughout the world by the members of the Apostleship.

Q. I understand the parable illustrative of this pious work; but tell me, in a word, the difference between the Apostleship practised as a private devotion and the same work exercised in the Association which bears its title.

A. The spirit, essence and object are the same in both cases. The difference lies in this, that the Association gives to this excellent devotion an organization and, above all, a special efficacy.

LESSON III. — *The Facility of Discharging the Duties of the Apostleship of Prayer considered as an Association.*

Question. Is it very difficult to become a member of this Holy League of the Apostleship?

Answer. There is nothing easier; only two very simple conditions are to be complied with.

Q. And what are these?

A. To be enrolled as a member of this Holy League, and "to make our own the interests of the Sacred Heart, *by offering at least once a day our prayers, labors and sufferings* for those intentions for which this Sacred Heart prays and immolates itself; in particular for the whole church, for the Sovereign Pontiff, and for those urgent intentions monthly recommended by the Director-General of the Association." (*Constitutions* approved by the Holy See, Art. 2.)

Q. How may this enrolment as a member be made?

A. In one of two ways. There is the *collective* affiliation intended for religious associations, such as congregations, sodalities, hospitals, parishes, religious communities, etc.; and there is personal enrolment for individuals.

Q. How may this collective affiliation be secured?

A. By a diploma which the parish, the community, or the society, desirous of being associated in this good work, should procure from the Director-General of the Apostleship of Prayer or from the Central Directors appointed by him.

Q. What is the nature of this collective affiliation? Has it the effect of admitting to the advantages of the Apostleship all the members of the society thus affiliated?

A. This *collective* affiliation confers on a parish or community the *right* of *enrolling* members in a Register which it opens in virtue of the Diploma received; but it does not directly admit individual members for this personal enrolment is necessary.

Q. How is this personal enrolment to be made?

A. By inscribing the name of the applicant in the Register of some parish or community already affiliated to the Apostleship. The new member must likewise receive gratuitously a certificate of membership. Where it is not practicable, as in foreign missions, this double formality

is not necessary: in other cases it must be observed, even when the applicants belong to associations already affiliated. As these two conditions must be complied with in order that the indulgences of the Apostleship may be obtained, it is well always to instruct applicants regarding their importance.

Q. Is there any prescribed formula for making the daily offering of our prayers and labors?

A. None. An excellent practice would be to add to the morning prayers the little offering published every month at the end of *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart.*

"Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer to Thee, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, all my prayers, actions and sufferings of this day, in union with all the intentions for which Thou dost constantly immolate Thyself on our altars. I offer them particularly for the *intentions* recommended to the Associates for this month and for this day. Amen."

Q. Is this offering a vow?

A. No. Nothing in the constitutions,

customs or practices of the Apostleship bind under pain of sin.

Q. Is it good to renew this offering during the day, at least by a short ejaculation?

A. It is, especially at the beginning of our principal actions, before our prayers, and when some sacrifice presents itself to us. It is quite evident, indeed, that the merit of all our labors and their efficacy in aid of souls will be the greater, the oftener and the more fervently we renew our consecration of them to the Sacred Heart.

LESSON IV.—*The Utility of certain Pious Organizations for rendering more Efficacious the Apostleship of Prayer.*

Question. Is the daily offering of our actions to the Heart of Jesus the only practice binding on the members of the Apostleship?

Answer. This daily oblation is in reality the "only condition imposed on the members, in order that they may enjoy the advantages granted by the Holy See to the Apostleship of Prayer." (*Statutes*, Art. 2.)

It must be confessed, however, that in view of human weakness, this essential practice must be upheld and fortified by certain accessory helps, drawn chiefly from pious organizations: otherwise, it is to be feared that this daily offering, in its unchanging simplicity, would soon fail to make any deep impression on the heart, and perhaps be forgotten entirely.

Q. I understand the force of this reply as it regards all except very fervent souls. Still, may not these pious organizations, if adopted, endanger that grand character of simplicity which distinguishes the Apostleship of Prayer?

A. No, if every one chooses that practice which is best suited to his condition of life. The means of organizing the Apostleship are very numerous. As all are aware, its essential act is the daily offering of our actions to the Heart of Jesus, which becomes at once an act of love for God, of zeal for His glory, and of prayer for His Church and its necessities. A devotion so Christian, so apostolic, so simple, and at the same time so fruitful, may very readily

be grafted on almost any other practice of piety, and while enjoying this latter's support, confer upon it very precious advantages.

Q. Which are the best means for effecting this organization of the Apostleship of Prayer?

A. It is not easy to give a definite answer, so much depends on the circumstances of the case. We may remark in general:

1st. That to render the Apostleship really fruitful, one or two methods of organizing it must be adopted; 2dly, that not many various organizations should be allied to it at one time.

The more ordinary and fruitful methods of promoting unity of organizations among the members are:

1. The circulation of *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, together with the publication of the monthly and daily intentions to be prayed for by the members of the Apostleship.

2. The union of Associates in ROSARY BANDS. In each band the fifteen myste-

ries of the rosary are distributed monthly, and each member is required to recite once the *Our Father*, ten times the *Hail Mary*, and once the *Glory be to the Father*, and also to make a special invocation to the Sacred Heart in behalf of the Holy Father's intention.

3. The Treasury of the Divine Heart, which issues lists of pious works to be performed in honor of the Sacred Heart. This is a very practical method of carrying out the pious suggestions made in previous numbers of this work.

4. The Communion of Reparation, which groups the members into sections of seven or thirty, for a week or for a month, so that daily one communion is made in reparation for the outrages offered our Lord in His Sacrament of Love.

To these four methods may be added the Papal Zouaves of Prayer, an association established in many educational houses, from which great advantages are derived by the young scholars. More details relative to the various pious associations may be found in the *Little Manual of the*

Apostleship of Prayer and in other special publications.

LESSON V.—*Advantages of the Apostleship of Prayer considered as an Association.*

Question. What are the advantages of the Apostleship considered as an Association?

Answer. Chiefly of two kinds; some concern the interests of the Heart of Jesus, others regard the welfare of the individual members of this pious League.

Q. Which are those that affect the interests of the Sacred Heart?

A. This Association, as we have heretofore observed, greatly promotes the interests of the Divine Heart by rendering more efficacious and more numerous the prayers and works offered for this end: I may add that it renders them more fervent.

Q. How do you show this?

A. It excites generosity by the spirit of emulation, enkindles ardor by fostering a spirit of union in pious efforts, and awakens

attention by keeping constantly before the mind the great end aimed at.

Q. How does this spirit of emulation render the Associates more generous?

A. The fear of falling behind others in the service of this Divine Heart stimulates and even forces them to generous efforts. The soldier, who by himself might have declined the battle, when animated by the example of his comrades, marches boldly under fire, and, unwilling to seem cowardly, bravely holds his post in the foremost rank. In the service of the Sacred Heart, we see the same fact verified: an Associate reading, for example, some of the heroic incidents often related in *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*, blushes at his own cowardice, and cries out with St. Augustine, "What others have done, cannot I do?" and so his prayers, labors and sacrifices are redoubled.

Q. In what manner does the fact of being associated with others enkindle fresh ardor among the members of the League?

A. The soldier, who, detailed as a solitary scout, cannot see the effect of his

shots, is soon discouraged. On the contrary, when he marches with his platoon, and can realize the effectiveness of his shots by the number of the enemy's slain, without stopping to reckon them, he rapidly multiplies his shots. The Apostle of Prayer when alone, is tempted to despondency by the feebleness of his efforts; but seeing himself sustained on all sides by Associates, and finding his prayers and labors supplemented by their exertions, he combats strenuously, as a good soldier of Christ, with redoubled ardor.

Q. How is it, that by keeping in view a fixed object, the League of the Sacred Heart arouses the attention of its members?

A. Every month certain special intentions, or, in other words, the most pressing interests of the Sacred Heart are recommended to the prayers of the members. It is certain that when for some one urgent necessity the Associates pray, labor and suffer, their fervor is excited and their attention concentrated.

Q. These special intentions may, it is true, excite interest in the Associates of the Apos-

tleship; but are they not also prejudicial to the true spirit of the Association, which seems to require a full consecration of prayers and labors to the interests of the Divine Heart, leaving it to this Heart to make the special applications of them?

A. These special intentions detract in no way from the general and unreserved offering of our works to the Heart of Jesus. As, however, among the many interests of that Divine Heart, some at times more especially claim our attention: to further these, our heartiest efforts should be made; just as in battle a skilful general directs his chief attacks against some few points that are keys to the enemy's position.

LESSON VI. — *Continuation of the preceding subject.*

Question. I understand how the interests of Jesus may be greatly promoted by the Apostleship, since it increases the number, the efficacy and the fervor of the prayers offered in their behalf; but how can it further

the attainments of what we need for ourselves?

Answer. Recall to mind the advantages that flow from the Apostleship when practised as a private devotion, and then reflect that these advantages are greatly multiplied when prayers and good works are offered by persons united in an association. The advantages immediately derived from the Apostleship are, that it *honors* its members and *enriches* them.

Q. How does the Apostleship of Prayer honor its members?

A. By assigning them a position in a League, which is honorable on account of the chosen souls who form it, and by reason of the glorious interests which it defends. If in an army it be reckoned glorious to serve in picked corps and in posts of danger, what signal glory must it not be for a soldier of the church militant to find himself battling in a league which counts among its members so many thousand choice souls, fervent religious, heroic missionaries, priests and pontiffs, and sharing in their labors, prayers and sacrifices.

Q. How does the Apostleship enrich its members?

A. With the indulgences that it enables them to gain, and with the share it gives them in the merits, prayers and good works of many religious orders and congregations.

Q. What are the indulgences granted to the members of the Apostleship?

A. Principally of two kinds: some proper to the Apostleship itself; others proper to the Arch-Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, to which the Apostleship is affiliated.

Q. What indulgences are proper to the Apostleship, and what are the conditions necessary for gaining them?

A. Plenary indulgences are granted, 1st, on the day of admission; 2d, on the feasts of the Sacred Heart and of the Immaculate Conception; 3d, on one Friday in each month, and on one other day, at the option of each member.

To gain these indulgences, it is necessary, in addition to the ordinary condition of visiting some church and praying for

the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff, that a person should belong to the Apostleship of Prayer and fulfil the one essential duty of the Association by making the daily offering of prayers and good works for the interests of the Sacred Heart.

A partial indulgence of one hundred days is attached to any prayer or good work offered for the intentions announced at the beginning of each month, and published in *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart.*

Q. What indulgences are proper to the Arch-Confraternity of the Sacred Heart, and what conditions are required for gaining them?

A. The list of these indulgences is too extended to be given here; they may be found in the *Little Manual.*

Each Associate of the Apostleship is by reason of his membership aggregated to the Arch-Confraternity. To gain all the indulgences granted to this latter body, it is necessary daily to say the *Pater, Ave,* and *Credo,* together with the aspiration, *Heart of Jesus, grant that I may love Thee*

daily more and more. It is sufficient to offer with this intention the *Pater, Ave,* and *Credo,* usually recited in morning or evening prayers.

Q. Are all these indulgences applicable to the souls in Purgatory?

A. All; not only our prayers, but especially the indulgences we gain, greatly aid our departed brethren.

Q. What means the communion of privileges enjoyed with many religious orders by the Apostleship of Prayer?

A. Many of the orders in the church have admitted the members of the Apostleship to the ranks of those for whom, in a special manner, they offer their prayers and good works.

No doubt it has often chanced that you have recommended yourself to the prayers of some fervent soul, some holy religious, and you have felt happy when you received the response: "Yes, I will pray for you." Well, as a member of the Apostleship of Prayer, you have thousands of religious daily offering for your supplication and good works.

Q. If such be the advantages accruing from membership in this Association, how does it happen that so few, comparatively, enroll themselves in its ranks?

A. Unfortunately, it is too little known. To know this practice is to love and embrace it. Hence the reason why in these instructions we have undertaken to explain the workings of this Association. Apply yourself at once to so salutary a devotion; seek to enlist others in the same pious work; organize those who are already enrolled; spread among them the accessory devotions mentioned in these instructions, and endeavor to enkindle true zeal in all hearts. Be generous and faithful in your love for this Sacred Heart; and, laden with blessings, you will say of the Apostleship which has drawn you so closely to it, what Solomon said of wisdom: "All good things came to me together with her. For she is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God." (Wis. vii. 11, 14.)

THE END.

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